



Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper II

- Can FCRA account deadline be extended, HC asks Centre
- Adoption issues to the fore as COVID-19 leaves many orphaned

GS Paper III

- Rural spread a reality, says govt.
- Virus situation worsens among tribals



Can FCRA account deadline be extended, HC asks Centre

The Delhi High Court has asked the Union Home Ministry to consider whether the April 1 deadline for opening the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) account for NGOs seeking to receive foreign funds can be extended in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlights:

1. Court asked the Ministry whether it could allow NGOs that have not been able to open FCRA accounts to receive foreign contributions, as long as they maintain records of the same, in accordance with the provisions of FCRA.
2. The NGOs claimed that they were “facing tremendous difficulty both in the opening of the FCRA account and also in the subsequent approval which is to be obtained from the Ministry”.
3. As per the new amendment, NGOs that receive foreign contributions are required to open an FCRA account in the New Delhi branch of the SBI. The NGOs have sought an extension for the April 1 deadline by a period of six months.

Adoption issues to the fore as COVID-19 leaves many orphaned

Family matters: Only the district-level child welfare committee can decide the future of children who have lost both parents to the infection.

Highlights:

1. The second wave of COVID-19 has left many children extremely vulnerable, particularly those who have been orphaned. In such an instance, Childline 1098 should be called, the national helpline for children.
2. The law is clear only a district CWC could decide the future of children found orphaned in such circumstances.
3. Social media adoption requests are “illegal” until they follow the procedure of the Juvenile Justice act, and may lead to trafficking in the garb of adoption and one must report all such cases to 1098, to the police or a child welfare committee (CWC).
4. The district CWC refers the child to a special adoption agency for interim care. The District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) would now undertake a social



investigation, which would include efforts to find members from the extended family who could be given custody of the child.

5. Failing that, the child may be declared orphaned, surrendered or abandoned before she is declared legally free for adoption.

Kinship care

1. Experts said adoption for such children was neither the first nor the best option and recommended kinship care as a more suitable alternative.
2. Over the years, we have learnt that the best way to respond to such a crisis is to retain the child within the birth family so that the child doesn't face double trauma.
3. In the case of COVID-19 orphans, they may have grandparents or uncle and aunts who are willing to take care of them. The intervention required in such situations is assistance and support for the prevention of family separation.
4. This is the time to focus on kinship care. The Ministry of Women and Child Development and all State departments concerned should immediately roll out a kinship care programme and make it part of foster care provisions under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.
5. Where relatives are interested to help, as in the case of the Uttar Pradesh family, they could follow the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, or the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, to adopt or seek legal custody under the Guardianship and Wards Act, 1890.

Rural spread a reality, says govt.

Centre calls for better primary healthcare, increased RAT and teleconsultation.

Highlights:

1. COVID-19's ingress is now being seen in peri-urban, rural and tribal areas as well, the Health Ministry admitted, weeks after a rising number of cases were reported from rural areas in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and other States.
2. The Ministry, in its document "SOP on COVID-19 containment and management in peri-urban, rural and tribal areas", said there was a need to enable communities and strengthen primary-level healthcare infrastructure at



all levels to intensify COVID-19 response in these new areas while continuing to provide other essential health services.

3. It added that symptomatic cases could be triaged at the village level by teleconsultation with the Community Health Officer (CHO), and cases with co-morbidities/low oxygen saturation should be sent to higher centres.
4. The Ministry has also said staff should be trained in performing rapid antigen test (RAT) and provision for test kits should be made at all public health facilities, including sub-centres/health and wellness centres and primary health centres (PHCs). These patients should also be counselled to isolate themselves till the test results were available.

Virus situation worsens among tribals

The COVID-19 situation appears to have worsened in certain areas inhabited by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Odisha.

Highlights:

1. As many as 23 persons belonging to the Dongria Kondh community, a PVTG in the Niyamgiri Hill range of Rayagada district in Odisha, have tested positive for COVID-19.
2. The district administration said the infection level was high in the community as the tribals were shying away from getting tested for COVID-19.
3. Similarly, in Malkangiri district, Bonda Hill, home to the Bonda community, another PVTG, has been declared a containment zone after 12 from the tribe tested positive for COVID-19.
4. The infections detected among the PVTGs in the second wave of COVID-19 has rung alarm bells in the administration. As the government is facing difficulties in convincing members of the Dongria Kondh community to come for tests.